

the British South Africa Police (BSAP) was responsible for internal operations. The Northern Rhodesia Police and Nyasaland Police also established a Security and Intelligence division closely modelled on the British Special Branch system.

This chapter will examine the various components of the Rhodesian Intelligence community from a participatory and strictly non-academic perspective. I strongly believe that sufficient time has elapsed for the dust to settle and now a sense of urgency prevails upon those of us who participated in the Zimbabwe Liberation War, from whichever side, to contribute to a better understanding of that war and its legacy — to clear a path through what is fast becoming a minefield of fact and fiction.<sup>1</sup>

### THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION

The activities of the CIO were largely unknown to the Rhodesian public. It was better known within the fraternity as the Department of the Prime Minister located at 'Red Bricks' (a contemporary nickname for Coghlan Buildings). The organization was funded by the Prime Minister's secret vote. The CIO was divided into two major departments. The first was the Internal Division headed by the Officer Commanding Special Branch who was known as the Director Internal (DIN). This division was also known as Branch I of the CIO. The second directorate dealt exclusively with external matters and was headed by the Director External (DEX) and was commonly known as Branch II. Both these directors were responsible in the hierarchy to the Deputy Director-General (DDG) and in turn to the Director-General (DG). Each major Directorate was supported by Sections and Desks with specific responsibilities which will be examined in greater detail. The Director-General was responsible for the Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) which advised the Prime Minister. The Director-General was also a member of the decision-making Combined Operations (COMOPS) formed in the late 1970s.

In later years the Rhodesian Air Force, and Army Intelligence Directorates were incorporated into the Directorate Air Intelligence (DAI) and Directorate Military Intelligence (DMI), respectively. The latter also included the Rhodesia Intelligence Corps (RIC) which had specific responsibilities for topographical intelligence. Extremely close liaison was established with 'C' Squadron Special Air Services and the Selous Scouts as these organizations provided the executive muscle for the CIO.

### BRANCH I: SPECIAL BRANCH

The Officer Commanding Special Branch at Salisbury Headquarters was known as DIN and was responsible to both the Director-General of the CIO and to the Commissioner of Police (COMPOL) through the Deputy Commissioner Crime and Security for all matters pertaining to internal security and intelligence. The Officer Commanding Special Branch (OCSB) was kept informed by his Provincial Special Branch Officers (PSBOs) and District Special Branch Officers (DSBOs) in the provinces and districts. The most important commands were those of Salisbury and Mashonaland and of Matabeleland. These stations, with their respective headquarters in Salisbury and Bulawayo were divided into sections known as Desks. Each Desk was headed by a Detective Inspector or Detective Chief Inspector with a staff of inspectors, section officers, patrol officers and woman patrol officers

and an African police team led by a Detective Sergeant Major, Detective Sergeant and Detective Constables. The Salisbury and Mashonaland command was originally located within the main BSAP central station complex in Railway Avenue but later the European desk moved into Daventry House and the Projects Section moved into an old house within the Braeside Police Camp. Each morning, at 0800 hours, Desk officers would attend the PSBO's 'morning prayers' for briefing on major developments within the last 24 hours. Weekly or, when the security situation warranted it, daily briefings were prepared by the PSBO and sent to the OCSB under secret cover by courier. These reports were used by the OCSB to prepare his submissions to COMPOL and the DG CIO who prepared the Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee Assessments of the Threat to Rhodesia for the Prime Minister and his close Cabinet colleagues.

PSBO Salisbury and Mashonaland also maintained a number of outstations at Chirundu and Salisbury Airport. These stations had the responsibility of monitoring incoming and outgoing security suspects, conducting overt and clandestine searches of baggage or 'facilitating' the arrival of special visitors such as foreign intelligence officers, Branch II officers and sanctions busters. (This meant that these persons were able to enter or leave the country without going through standard customs and immigration formalities).

### *The European Desk*

The European Desk had a specific brief to report on all aspects of the security threat from Europeans, to obtain intelligence on a wide range of subjects including the activities and workings of neighbouring police forces, security and intelligence organs, armies and air forces, economic intelligence, the University, religious targets and both left- and right-wing organizations. The brief was so wide-ranging that often European Desk officers found themselves crossing paths with Branch II personnel. On one occasion surveillance operations were mounted — only to discover that the suspected premises were being used as a 'safe house' by Branch II. Again, while the Special Branch brief was generally internal, operations regularly took officers outside the country to meet sources.

Primary targets on the left included individuals or subjects active in political and religious organizations perceived as being in support of or sympathetic towards African nationalist aspirations. These included the Christian Action Group, Cold Comfort Farm, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia, The Centre Party (CP), the Rhodesia Party (RP), the National Unifying Force (NUF), and Ranche House College. *The Central African Examiner*, founded in the early 1960s by veteran journalist, Theo Bull, and later edited by Eileen Haddon, was reckoned to be extremely anti-Government. Worse still, Eileen Haddon had links with the Black Sash movement of South Africa. After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) the Government imposed censorship and the *Central African Examiner* appeared with more blank spaces than text. The publication of these blank spaces irritated Rhodesian officialdom who saw it as an act of defiance in itself and these too were banned. Before long the journal was proscribed and the Haddons abandoned the country for Zambia. The press corps were specifically targeted as a threat and an opportunity.

The account of White dissent in Zimbabwe's history is poorly documented and the only contribution with which the author is familiar is Ian Hancock's *White*

*Liberals, Moderates and Radicals in Rhodesia 1953-1980.*<sup>2</sup> One of the earliest voices of protest was that of Doris Lessing. Her marriage to Peter Lessing and apparent links with Communism were recorded by Special Branch in her Personal File. Her collection of short stories highlighted many of the racial and social injustices in contemporary White society. There is a special poignancy and bitterness in her writing which most Rhodesians did not like to read. In 1956 she returned to Southern Rhodesia and travelled extensively and spoke to listed Communists and liberals. Her visit produced *Going Home*,<sup>3</sup> a bitter, prophetic and often bleakly funny account of White society and its victims. She was declared a Prohibited Immigrant by the authorities acting on the advice of FISBY and XB who judged her to be a threat to internal security. Her return in 1982 left her dismayed that attitudes had not altered and the mentality so adroitly described those years ago still deeply embedded in the 'Rhodie' psyche. The left of Lessing's circle was involved in the International Club, the Capricorn Society, the Black Sash Movement and a string of organizations which were targeted as a threat to security.

Whites who stood up against the Rhodesian establishment were vilified and often the XB and later the SB were instructed to target them. Reports including even the minutiae of their daily activities were demanded. Recognizing that Garfield Todd was a threat, the SB instigated a smear campaign by circulating rumours that Todd was a defrocked Minister of Religion who had a penchant for smacking the naked bottoms of girls at Dadaya school. In the wake of the ill-fated Pearce Commission which sat to determine African opinion on the acceptability of the proposed settlement and the violence which ensued throughout the country on 18 January 1972, an SB team raided Todd's ranch at Hokomui arresting both the former Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister and his daughter Judith. Both were detained.

Right-wing political organizations spotlighted by the SB included the Rhodesian Republican Army (RRA) which began in the early 1960s. This was a group which had its roots in the Enkeldoorn (Chivhu) Afrikaans farming community and enjoyed some urban White support in Salisbury. The RRA initiated a crude urban bombing and pamphleteering campaign in support of their policy of closer ties with the apartheid policy of South Africa. The SB penetrated the group and when its leader, John Avery was convicted under the Public Order Maintenance Act on 2 November 1960, the organization died. The Republican Alliance (RA) formed in the late 1960s attracted Len Idensohn and Ernest Konschell (the designer of the ill-fated anti-landmine vehicle called the Leopard). Surveillance of the Right-wing continued when Idensohn formed the Rhodesia National Party (RNP) in 1968. This was supported by a dissident Rhodesia Front (RF) Member of Parliament, Christopher Wordsworth Phillip, who formed his own Democratic Party (DP) on 8 May 1972 with the principle that the White man and his civilization in Rhodesia should be preserved for all time.

The Rhodesia Action Party (RAP) was formed on 5 July 1977 by 12 renegade RF parliamentarians led by Des Frost who had resigned the Chairmanship of the RF as he was disgruntled with Smith's leadership. The RAP under Ian Sandeman, stood for total separate development and opposed Smith's settlement talks as a sell-out. These organizations were routinely penetrated by extremely well-placed sources who handed over minutes of meetings or tape recordings of meetings. Trusted agents were equipped with special briefcases fitted with concealed

microphones and tape recorders. In extreme cases, political parties were so thoroughly penetrated that the SB directed their affairs through its agents.

So accurate were these SB reports that Smith was able to call a general election on 31 August 1977 and effectively destroy the credibility of the RAP. The existence of fringe right-wing organizations proved a continual embarrassment to the Rhodesian Government. These included the Candour League under the stewardship of Betty Wemyss who kept in touch with like-minded organizations and pro-Rhodesia lobby groups throughout the world. These included the Liberty Lobby in the United States, the John Birch Society, and the Herstichte Nasionale Partie (HNP) of South Africa. Betty Wemyss was also active in the Southern African Solidarity Congress (SASCON), an organization which stood for the White man in a united front against Communism. The SASCON was strongly supported by the right-wing journal, *Rhodesian Property and Finance*.

Following Smith's visit to Pretoria in September 1976 for his meeting with the United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, SASCON met to organize a protest demonstration at the South African Prime Minister's official residence in Pretoria. Details of this plan were obtained by the SB and the Rhodesian contingent travelling to South Africa to participate in this bizarre affair where rounded up by the South African Police Security Branch and deported. Not since the days of the Ossewabrandwag in 1938-40 had the SAP been called upon to take action against their own kind. The SB later congratulated themselves when they sat down to watch an 8 mm home movie shot by their agent depicting scenes from this strange episode.

The University was a major target of the European Desk which focused on personalities within the student and academic population. Societies and organizations were targeted and routinely reported upon. The mid-1970s, 1973 in particular, were characterized by massive campus unrest. The student body was extremely militant and Black frustration expressed itself in violence. Political scientists such as Ashley Dixon were identified with the growing militancy within the Students Representative Council (SRC) and the Union Administrative Council (UAC). The monthly campus magazine *Grope* which was a popular medium for articles critical of the Rhodesian Government, was subsequently banned by government decree although the SB had argued that it acted as a safety valve.

Not for the first time, the Rhodesian government made decisions which ignored Security and Intelligence advice and succeeded only in aggravating the situation. Riots which lasted a week devastated the campus. In an unprecedented move, uniformed Police patrolled the University grounds for two weeks. In the aftermath of the university unrest many students fled the country for Botswana or overseas. Official scapegoats were found in the form of left-wing expatriate academics such as Dixon and were quickly deported.

Information on personalities and organizations was gathered by various means. It was collected from overt sources but largely through covert means in the form of source reports, from technical means, surveillance and clandestine searches of offices and residences. Text-book security and intelligence craftwork based on British MI5 procedures were employed with varying degrees of efficiency. Although the intelligence gathering was based on MI5 techniques, very little formal training was provided for new entrants into the SB and tradecraft was essentially learned on the job. However, some SB officers had a real knack for the work and very

successful operations were mounted by them into Zambia during the late 1960s. When Air Rhodesia was still flying to Lusaka, pilots were recruited to act as couriers and agents. One successful and resourceful agent regularly burgled the ZAPU offices in Lusaka removing documents for his SB runner. Agents were later recruited within the Zambian Intelligence Service (ZIS) and from the Zambian Police (ZP), the Zambian Army and Air Force. The SB even succeeded in recruiting a 'Registry Queen' who worked at ZIS Headquarters in Lusaka and who handed over highly classified information to her runner for several months. Most of these sources, agents or couriers were ideologically motivated and pecuniary reward was not a major consideration. A personal file was later opened on one of these agents when he emerged as a right winger opposed to Smith's alleged 'sell-out' of the Whites in the 1970s.

Periodic, two-week 'advanced training courses' were held at Salisbury Headquarters for Detective Inspectors when they were introduced to the broader intelligence community including the external activities of Branch II, technical operations and administration. Special Branch manpower was drawn from the Criminal Investigation Department and therefore remained on Police payroll. Officers were often transferred back and forth because of promotion and it often happened that the Officer-in-Charge of a CID district or provincial station had at one time served in the Special Branch and retained his SB identity. To facilitate their duties, SB officers occasionally posed as Immigration and/or Customs Officials and carried suitable identity documents to support these personas. Security Reports were graded according to the known reliability of the source and the probability of accuracy and then classified either CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET or TOP SECRET. These reports were sent to Salisbury Headquarters where the appropriate Desk marked them up for indexing, processing into Intelligence briefings or for executive action. Reports concerning the peccadillos or human foibles of security subjects were routinely passed through to OPS for use in their Disinformation section.

The European Press also had the task of co-ordinating the security of the Rhodesian Prime Minister. A number of Section Officers and Inspectors were seconded from the Uniformed Branch of the BSAP to the SB for this work. On external trips, the Prime Minister was always accompanied by a Detective Inspector from the Special Branch whose job it was to liaise with the security and intelligence service of the host country for his security.

Because of the highly sensitive nature of Rhodesian sanctions-busting activities, the European Desk had the additional brief to monitor and report on any organizations or individuals suspected of being inimical to Rhodesian interests. Particularly threatening were visiting journalists who asked too many questions about this sensitive issue. Keeping a tight lid on sanctions-busting secrets also involved the Office of the Government Protective Security Officer (GPSO) which was placed in charge of physical security to prevent unauthorized access to factories and government offices. The GPSO was headed by a former colonial civil servant Colonel 'Buggy' Romily and his offices were located in Milton Buildings adjacent to the Prime Minister's rooms. Romily's brief was to supervise all aspects of physical security but he found the job of checking padlocks boring and came into conflict with the Special Branch who spent considerable time spying on both Romily and his Department. This was necessary because Romily's second in command, a South African named Jan Erasmus, who was suspected of having ties

with the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), was busy running agents in Zambia. One of these unfortunate individuals was arrested by the Zambian Intelligence Service (ZIS) and later deported. The incident soured relations between the GPSO and the Special Branch and Romily was told to 'wind his neck in'. However, Romily's endeavours were recognized by the Rhodesian Government which decorated him for services to the Government.

Special Branch liaised closely with the Customs and General Advisor to the Prime Minister (a sanctions-busting section within the Department of Customs and Excise) providing them with information on suspects, assisting with forged travel documents, stationery and other requirements to beat the economic embargo — although most of this work was co-ordinated by Salisbury Headquarters there was considerable liaison between the two structures at provincial level.

A general brief for the European Desk was to report upon and identify illegal foreign intelligence activity within the country. There were a number of successes in this regard, the most notable of these being the arrest of Roger Nicholson and Trevor Gallagher who were working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The link between the two agents and the CIA resident was picked up during routine surveillance on US Embassy personnel. The Special Branch maintained a surveillance team comprising both mobile units and footmen who were deployed against security suspects.

Vehicles were equipped with false registration plates to prevent any official link. The non-availability of vehicles — often the Special Branch operated with dilapidated and conspicuous vehicles — was of continual concern and frequently a surveillance exercise was terminated because an operation had been blown when the subject took evasive action or behaved in a suspicious manner.

### ***Terrorist Desk***

This was an extremely important section responsible for reporting on the activities of ZAPU and ZANU. The most important Desks were at Bulawayo (chiefly occupied with ZAPU) and Salisbury and Mashonaland (largely concerned with ZANU) and their Salisbury Headquarters co-ordinators. These Desks maintained important clandestine links within the movements through a network of agents and sources who had been planted during the 1960s and early 1970s. The Terrorist Desk also ran agents in Botswana, Zambia and Malawi who provided information on ZAPU and ZANU. The formation of the Terrorist Desk had its origins in the Sabotage Squad formed in the 1960s by the CID before it was disbanded and all records transferred to the Special Branch. The Terrorist Desk reported on all activities relating to nationalist guerrilla activities in Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and later Mozambique. This was done by infiltrating agents and sources into the organizations, by recruiting agents within the Security or Military Services of countries which provided training or transit camp facilities and by interrogation of captured guerrillas.

During the 1960s and early 1970s great achievements were scored by the Terrorist Desk agents, many of whom successfully returned from training in the USSR and China — to the glee of their runners. Incredibly detailed interrogation reports were regularly submitted by the Terrorist Desk and, depending upon the calibre of the capture, Sectorial, Detachment and Section names, Chimurenga code names, the serial numbers of weapons issued, the rank structures within Sectors and the

Rear, details on training camps, and so on were documented. Lists of known or suspected guerrillas were carefully scrutinized and every endeavour made to provide accurate identifications. Photographs collected from friends and relatives brought in for interrogation were also used. This was the procedure until the mid-1970s when the sheer volume of information dictated otherwise.

At Salisbury Headquarters level, interrogation and source reports were correlated against radio intercepts from countries hosting ZANU and ZAPU trainees and material made available by Branch II liaison with foreign Intelligence Services, to produce intelligence which by the late 1970s painted a very bleak picture indeed.

Although the Terrorist Desk had lists of thousands of recruits under training in Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique plus details of specialist courses at Nanking in the Chinese People's Republic, at Odessa in the USSR and other obscure locations, could talk authoritatively about at least four different models of the SKS 7,62 mm SimonovSI semi-automatic rifle (Chinese model 56, Chinese Sanitized model 56, North Vietnamese model, North Korean model 63), at least twelve different models of the Avtomat Kalashnikov 7,62 mm AK-47 Assault Rifle (Russian, Chinese type 56, Chinese type 56-1 folding butt, Bulgarian, Rumanian with front grip, North Korean, AKM East German, AKM USSR folding butt, M-64 Yugoslav), precious little of this extremely interesting yet highly academic intelligence resulted in actual kills for the Rhodesian Security Forces who became increasingly frustrated.

Technical information relative to Soviet, Eastern European, Chinese or Korean manufactured weapons, land mines, radio equipment, code-books and ammunition was routinely 'traded' with friendly foreign Intelligence Services. The Terrorist Desk established excellent liaison with the 'Military Attaché' of an Embassy in a neighbouring country and regularly handed over information on Soviet and Chinese training camps, samples of captured weapons, radio equipment and other data. This liaison was extremely valuable for the Rhodesians who received their *quid pro quo*. Even Eastern European Intelligence Services occasionally condoned this type of 'liaison' with the Rhodesians and on at least one occasion a Lusaka-based Czechoslovakian Intelligence Service Officer was 'facilitated' into the country for liaison.

In the beginning all this information had been collected and submitted for filing, but, increasingly, imaginative use was made of field captures for immediate deployment and the Terrorist Desk started to work in close liaison with the Selous Scouts. Other aspects of the Terrorist Desk reports were used by OPS of Branch II in their planning for external operations. By the late 1970s there was extremely close co-operation between Terrorist Desk, the Selous Scouts at both 'Fort' and 'Headquarters' (Bindura and Inkomo) levels, and OPS as the accent switched to hard utilization of intelligence. Initiatives undertaken by the Terrorist Desk in this regard included the use of sophisticated explosive devices installed in radios and the use of poisoned clothing which was then delivered to guerrilla units by informers and agents employed by their SB runners.

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s before the *Chimurenga* war started with a vengeance in the north-eastern theatre, the Terrorist Desk success stories focused on identifying and intercepting individuals and groups sent into the country by ZANU and ZAPU on intelligence-gathering, reconnaissance or sabotage missions.

5  
JR  
RS

Rhodesian ability to neutralize these early endeavours was one of the major contributing factors for ZANU's switch in tactics in the early 1970s.

### Projects Section

The formation of the Projects Section came when the Terrorist Desk decided to make quicker and more efficient use of operational intelligence gleaned from interrogation reports. The section was formed by Detective Inspector Vic Opperman and accommodated in an old residence at the Braeside Police Camp. Regular SB officers were augmented by Police Reservists on national service plus a team of African Detectives. A field operational Headquarters was established on Retreat Farm north of Bindura in the Operation Hurricane area and it served to accommodate a team of Special Branch officers and Police Reservists ready to deploy in response to *hotint* or information of immediate operational value. After deployments, which occasionally resulted in kills or captures of genuine or suspected guerrillas or *mujibas*, the team would return to base for a de-briefing and R & R (rest and recreation). The Projects Section motto was *pachedu*, a Shona word meaning 'together' and a special beer mug was commissioned and issued to the section members.

The old-style farm house at Retreat provided the offices and sleeping accommodation for the command structure while the disused tobacco barns were converted into barracks for the *mujibas* who were paid a kill bonus of \$1 000 per head after a successful hit. The Projects Section was the forerunner of the Operation Favour Programme which provided full-scale training of Security Force auxiliaries in support of the internal settlement initiative of 1978-79. The switch to Operation Favour was relatively easy because the facilities to accommodate and train large numbers of men were now in existence. Two additional farms, Buckridge and Champagne, were opened as training centres to accommodate between 200 and 400 men on thirty-day training cycles before their deployment into the so-called proscribed areas as supporters of the UANC. This concept was soon extended in support of Ndabaningi Sithole's ZANU elements and extra training camps mushroomed as the concept was taken on board. The Special Branch were increasingly involved in Operation Favour until the *Phumo re Vanhu* (Spear of the People) force was finally disbanded in early 1980.

As Projects was drawn into the training aspect of Operation Favour so was the European Desk. Two Detective Inspectors were delegated to liaise with the UANC and ZANU (SITHOLE) respectively to co-ordinate the gathering of intelligence, channel cash for recruitment of urban unemployed for the training programmes and generally administer operations. While recruits for the UANC side were relatively easy to find in the townships, the Special Branch had to fly to Uganda to collect a ragged band of Sithole's men who later masqueraded as ZANLA guerrillas who had switched sides. A horrifying sequel to this operation was the killing of nearly 200 of Sithole's auxiliaries at Nembudziya in the Gokwe district in April 1979. The men had become an embarrassment and had to be eliminated.

### Nationalist Desk

This Desk served to gather information on all Zimbabwean African Nationalist Movements locally and externally until it was amalgamated with the Terrorist Desk in the late 1970s. It also reported on the activities of Zambian and Malawian

2  
15  
or  
ers



political parties, that is, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and allied organizations. An important function of the Nationalist Desk was to report upon and recommend the detention or restriction of Zimbabwean nationalists. These recommendations were submitted to Salisbury Headquarters where the appropriate paperwork recommending the detention or restriction of an individual was prepared for signature by the Minister of Law and Order. Appeals were heard by the Review Tribunal at Salisbury Headquarters which would recommend to the Minister of Law and Order whether or not a particular individual could be released from detention or restriction.

#### *Administration, Finance, Training and Liaison*

In addition to the Headquarters Desk structures which were generally commanded by a Detective Chief Inspector or Inspector plus a team of 'Research Officers' responsible for receiving and processing station reports into useable intelligence, there were additional sections at Salisbury Headquarters level. These included Finance and Training, Personnel Administration and Liaison with the South Africa Police Security Branch in Pretoria. The Finance and Training Officer handled the reimbursement of the station impress accounts for source and operational payments, provision of foreign currency, passports and periodic advanced training programmes.

Personnel took care of staff films, leave, transfers and identity documents. As noted earlier, all manpower was held against the BSAP establishment for reasons of pay and promotions; costs were debited to the annual budgeted Police vote. Branch II resources were held against the Department of the Prime Minister, the Department of External Affairs and from 1975 onwards the annual 'official' expenditure of the Prime Minister's Office was Z\$6 million with additional funding being provided by the South Africans for specific operations. Liaison was conducted by an officer seconded to the Rhodesian mission in Pretoria. The links with the South African Police Security Branch was considered extremely important and operated independently of the liaison which Branch II had with the Bureau of State Security (BSS) and later National Intelligence Service (NIS) which was largely eclipsed by the aggressive SADF Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI).

Both Branch I and II were served by a Registry for confidential and secret matters and a special Top Secret Registry. The Registries were generally overseen by awful peroxided or blue-tinted haridans who knew all the gossip about Salisbury Headquarters staff. The Salisbury and Mashonaland Special Branch Registry with its thousands of dusty files on persons, organizations and subjects — some dating back to the earliest days of the SB — was overseen by a 'Registry Queen' with a vicious tongue who was reputed to be on a bottle of gin a day. The monotonous work of indexing and filing secret papers appears to attract a particular kind of person. These members of staff took care of all incoming and outgoing paperwork, card indexing and filing. Every Friday night the See Eye Oh bar at Salisbury Headquarters was open for drinks and here assorted security and intelligence officers and invited guests mingled and swapped yarns.

#### *Ground coverage scheme*

This section was located at Salisbury Headquarters where the Officer Commanding (OCCG) received ground coverage (GC) reports from his stations throughout the country. Regular, uniformed branch officers were seconded to the scheme to

...a need for grassroots intelligence. In reality, the GC scheme generated more paperwork and their only effective contribution was to provide the SB with additional manpower. It can be argued that the formation of this new intelligence-gathering organization came about because of inter-service jostling; the Uniformed Branch did not want to be left out of the fast-developing and 'sexy' intelligence game. Every Police station throughout the country had a GC Section Officer or Patrol Officer and a number of Sergeants and Constables. Their expenses were funded from a special cash float established by the SB. The GC reports, frequently based on rumour, local beerhall gossip and petty feuds, were channelled to the SB for comment: many of these reports were consigned to File 13 — the waste bin.

The post of OCGC was a comfortable sinecure for the early incumbents but as the pace quickened the scheme was distorted and the manpower swallowed up by the operational maw. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAF) established a similar scheme based at District Commissioner level in the provinces and this structure proved similarly ineffective in the fast-changing context of providing operational intelligence. Indeed there were a number of successes but these were an exception to a standard ineptitude.

## BRANCH II: EXTERNAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE

Branch II was commanded by the Director External (DEX). DEX was served by a central evaluation division which comprised a number of Desks or Regions. These were:

- Portugal and Lusophone Africa
- South Africa, South West Africa and Lesotho
- Zambia, Malawi and Botswana
- Africa (Francophone)
- Europe and International Organizations, UN etc.
- Communism
- General (the rest of the world).

The most important Desk was the one dealing with Communism; its brief included just about anything and everything. It provided for absolute liaison with all friendly intelligence services on matters relating to the Soviets, Eastern Europe and China. Excellent bilateral liaison was established with foreign intelligence services interested in bartering this type of intelligence.

Desk Officers submitted their requirements to the field intelligence gathering division, Production (PROD), which was later re-named Collection (COL) whose task it was to meet these demands by overt or covert means. Desk Officers needed a regular supply of newspapers, Government Gazettes, Legislation and Government reports. Desk Officers would prepare detailed requirements on target countries, organizations or personalities and present these to COL. Based on this raw intelligence, the Desk Officers prepared evaluations or hard intelligence reports were channelled up the line to DEX, the DDG and DG for the ICC briefing papers.

Most Branch II Desk Officers were experienced men with a background in the old FISBY, British MI5, Northern Rhodesia Police (NRP) Special Branch, Kenya Police Special Branch or retired officers from the BSAP SB or CID. Many were multi-lingual which facilitated liaison with both the French internal and external security and intelligence services and the Portuguese. The diverse backgrounds of these officers gave rise to a popular misconception within certain Branch I circles that Branch II was riddled with MI5 and MI6 agents and may even explain the post-independence rumours within the exiled Rhodesian community in South Africa that Ken Flower himself was a British agent.

If any routine reports submitted by COL contained 'dirt' or information considered to be of value to OPS division, it was channelled to them for disinformation purposes. No questions were ever asked. During the Internal Settlement manoeuvres of the late 1970s OPS instigated a smear campaign against leading ZANU personalities. Information was leaked to press contacts or supplied anonymously. The authoritative newsletter, *Africa Confidential*, was a convenient medium for channelling information.

Collection was supported by the radio and telecommunications monitoring division. Cryptographers employed by the CIO monitoring division and supported by national servicemen in liaison with DMI successfully intercepted radio traffic in neighbouring countries. Most countries were extremely lax or employed outdated codes which were readily broken. The Zambian Intelligence Service (ZIS) code was broken as was that of the Kenya Special Branch. The Zaïre code was also deciphered. After Mocambique and Angola became independent the local codes presented no problems. This source of intelligence provided important corroboration for human intelligence or *humint*. Interestingly, the CIO tried to crack the South African networks but this proved impossible because of their superior technology including the use of one-time pads.

Collection division officers travelled regularly throughout the world in pursuance of their assignments. The regular routing took them through the Pretoria station for a change of passport and identity or on an Affretair sanctions-busting flight to Libreville in Gabon where the Foreign Affairs representative provided them with fresh travel documents and identity papers. Not all the information obtained by Collection was authentic and on more than one occasion, officers tasked with a particularly difficult question, would manufacture information based on their own intuition or after a general thumb-sucking session with friendly intelligence officers or field agents. The Collection division enjoyed considerable operational independence and a high degree of integrity was expected. For example, financial accountability was not always desirable because of the clandestine nature of the work. Unfortunately for one senior operative, the temptation proved too much, and thousands of dollars of operational expenses were misappropriated before the officer concerned was discovered and dealt with.

Branch II posted officers to foreign stations which were established with the consent of the host country's intelligence service. These were:

- Athens
- Paris
- Lisbon

- Pretoria
- Washington
- Libreville
- Lourenco Marques

In addition to these intelligence stations, the department of Foreign Affairs established posts in Madrid and Rome. A key player in this regard was the Rhodesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, P. K. Van der Byl, who ordered his men to liaise with the Spanish Royal Family, Otto Von Hapsburg, the exiled ruler of Albania, King Zog, and his South African wife, the Bourbon pretender to the French throne, Henri Sitx, plus a score of obscure personages. The CIO made good use of the Foreign Affairs connection and officers were posted to the Ministry where they worked covertly on intelligence-gathering operations.

The South Africans posted permanent intelligence officers on a reciprocal basis. The SADF stationed a Military Attaché at their Trade Mission and so did the civilian intelligence service. Other friendly services made regular liaison visits to exchange intelligence or communicate particular messages. Intelligence services belong to a sort of brotherhood; they provide an important conduit by which hostile Governments can communicate in secret. The Rhodesian CIO was not excluded from this fraternity of the twilight world.

### **OPS**

This division enjoyed an executive function including clandestine military style operations abroad, disinformation plus intelligence gathering from friendly services and organizations. OPS worked in very close liaison with 'O' Squadron, Special Air Services who provided them with operational muscle and training facilities such as the case of the Biafrans who sent a contingent to Rhodesia for military training preparatory to armed insurrection against the Federal Nigerian Government.

The section came into being soon after the formation of the CIO itself. Evidence of its earliest operations came on 12 October 1966 when Colour Sergeant Cahill and Warrant Officer Bouch of the SAS and a Police Superintendent died in an explosion while trying to enter Zambia across the Zambezi. In a similar operation, Corporal Eggleston of the Rhodesia Light Infantry (RLI) died on 15 February 1966 when crossing the Zambezi river into Zambia. In the mid-1970s, OPS activities were massively upscaled and retired Assistant Commissioner E. J. May was appointed to head its activities on 1 January 1975. May was known as 'C' and under his direction OPS were in regular contact with French intelligence in both Libreville and Abidjan and several African intelligence services who found it convenient to 'liaise' with the Rhodesians for one reason or the other. Contact was also made with Col. Bod Denard in the Comores and other former or still active mercenary elements. OPS grew into a powerful division and towards the end of the 1970s represented the most conservative and radical element within the Rhodesian intelligence community. OPS were involved in a series of letter bombings which targeted external nationalist leaders and one of their successful operations caused the death of J. Z. Moyo on 18 February 1977.

OPS were responsible for setting up the MNR operations in Mozambique. The training camp was established at Rusape with Peter Burt, a former Branch II liaison officer in Lisbon, in charge of operations. OPS were similarly involved in

the ill-fated Angolan escapades of 1975-76 in support of the FNLA. The details of these foreign adventures are covered in my *Rhodesian Front War*.<sup>4</sup>

The division was responsible for the planning and execution of several external operations including those against Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU in Lusaka, Zambia. OPS established good working relations with the SADF DMI with whom they enjoyed a common hawkish philosophy. During the final hours before Zimbabwe's independence, OPS sought to escalate the war externally and on more than one occasion when asked why they had selected a particular target for sabotage answered by saying 'because it's there!' Often, they had no valid reason at all. OPS recruited a team of former SAS men and a network of hard-bitten agents for field operations in neighbouring countries. One of their agents, Michael Borlace, was subsequently arrested in Zambia which gave rise to the suspicion that OPS activities were being compromised from within.

#### ***Department Z***

The planning and intelligence aspects of the Selous Scouts were co-ordinated at Salisbury Headquarters level under Department 'Z' while field operations HQ was located first at Bindura and then at Inkomo barracks. Provincial and district 'forts' were established throughout the country adjacent to Joint Operational Command posts (JOCs).

#### ***The Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI)***

The Directorate of Military Intelligence reported to the Director-General on all matters of military intelligence. The Rhodesian Intelligence Corps (RIC) was responsible for the production of topographical intelligence and they produced 1:250 000 maps covering the whole of Zimbabwe and neighbouring target countries. These maps were marked RESTRICTED indicating that they were for military use only and reflected useful items of ground intelligence such as water points, villages and even caves which could be exploited by Security Forces during ground operations. The RIC posted men to all Joint Operational Commands (JOCs), sub-JOCs and other military locations to carry out this work in close liaison with SB stations where they were physically accommodated.

#### ***JOCs and Operational Intelligence***

Each operational command or JOC comprised Army, Airforce, Police and INTAF personnel (in Security Force jargon, the Browns, Blues, Bailiffs and INTAF) at various levels of seniority depending upon whether it was a main JOC or a sub-JOC. Those uniformed services which jointly provided the bayonettes and air support were briefed by the Bailiff Acorn or Special Branch representative on the JOC. At some JOCs, the Bailiff Acorn was supported by the local Selous Scouts' representative and they would provide operational intelligence based on the interrogation of captured guerrillas and source reports from external operations. This was supplemented by Observation Point reports radioed in from fixed observation points established on hill features overlooking known infiltration routes or suspected guerrilla rendezvous or feeding points. It was also the role of the SB representative to the JOCs to prepare the daily intelligence report which accompanied the daily 'sitrep' telexed through to COMOPS every night. SB also

accompanied SF units on field operations where there was a chance of capturing and interrogating guerrillas in the field.

As the tide turned against the Rhodesian Security Forces the most effective operational intelligence was increasingly supplied by captured guerrillas who could be quickly de-briefed and 'turned' for field deployment with the Selous Scouts. This tactic brought the SB into conflict with some conservative CID officers who wanted to prosecute guerrillas in terms of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act. They perceived the war as they had done in the 1960s when bands of armed insurgents had come into the country and been quickly dealt with. The task of translating SB INT to operational intelligence was carried out by the G3 INT officer at every JOC. G3 INT officers worked in liaison with the SB, RIC or the Selous Scouts where appropriate.

#### **DAI**

The Directorate of Air Intelligence held against Air Force establishments also reported to the Director-General on all aspects of air and naval intelligence. In addition to their primary function of providing aerial photography of external training camps or possible targets for sabotage operations they also provided naval intelligence on the port of Beira and inland water traffic on Lake Kariba. DAI provided efficient photographic interpretation which was of great assistance in planning external operations such as in the case of the raids against Chimoio, Tembue and Nyadzonia. Not only did DAI map outside the country but they also had instructions to map Zimbabwe: their aerial photographs are a valuable legacy.

During the internal settlement initiatives of the 1970s, the US Ambassador in South Africa and Lusaka made frequent visits. On one occasion DAI learned that the US Government aircraft was equipped with aerial photographic equipment so, to teach the Americans a lesson, OPS were tasked to blow-up the nose-cone of the aircraft where the camera equipment was installed. The SAS were deployed and the dual mission of destroying the equipment and telling the Americans that they should have asked for permission first was duly accomplished.

#### **SUMMARY**

Towards the end of the 1970s a marked difference of opinion emerged within the CIO and this manifested itself particularly in the viewpoint represented in the briefing papers prepared by OPS, COL and individual Desks. As noted earlier, OPS took a more aggressive and militant stance. During the crucial period just before Independence, the Director-General Ken Flower, argued repeatedly that the best way to serve the interests of the country and ensure stability was by continuing to provide intelligence needs in the most professional manner. Senior Branch II officers knew which way the wind was blowing in late 1979 and early 1980. Liaison with the South Africans and US intelligence services underscored the British resolve to respect the outcome of the Zimbabwean general elections come what may. COMOPS were fully aware of the bleak, no-win situation which now prevailed in the operational areas. In terms of manpower alone, the Rhodesian Security Forces were heavily outnumbered on the ground. Large tracts of countryside were no-go areas for all but the Selous Scouts on their clandestine

missions. Exactly how forcibly this message was communicated to Smith is a matter for conjecture.

Ken Flower was also badly advised by the Director of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), who argued that large-scale intimidation by ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas would influence the outcome of the elections. His view was, of course, echoed by the hysterical Ministry of Internal Affairs with their proven track record of knowing the 'African mind'. Smith's Internal Affairs 'wormtongues' got it completely wrong back in 1972 during the Pearce Commission Test of Acceptability. There were also a number of hawks within COMOPS who had to be pacified. Ken Flower's task was to make Smith realize that, irrespective of the truth of these assertions, the British were absolutely serious — the message had been received *Strength Five* from liaison sources. Smith and his immediate colleagues had always been difficult to convince. That Flower was now able to do this and dissuade the Rhodesian leader from listening to the hardliners must be considered a major turning point. Early warning signs of the inevitable had come from the Special Branch in mid-1972 who submitted A1 reports on the extent of guerrilla recruitment, the caching of weapons and munitions and the ZANU-FRELIMO co-operation in the Tete province of Mozambique.

The SB later established that porterage groups, one hundred strong, were busy ferrying equipment into the mountains of the north-east. Whether or not these reports had been accurately presented to Smith cannot be established but it certainly came as no surprise to some members of the Special Branch when the ZANLA *gukurahundi* swept down on the Centenary and Mount Darwin districts and Operation Hurricane was launched in early 1973. The successful outcomes of earlier counter-insurgency operations may have convinced Smith that a swift military solution could again be employed. He was distrustful of the alarmist reports now being presented to him in support of a political solution.

Worse still, Flower had to contend with the conservative and hardline views presented by OPS, PSYOPS and INTAF and balance these against the more pragmatic and realistic argument from the moderates within the CIO, which included the Special Branch.

There is no doubt that both Branch I and II were very efficient at gathering information and preparing assessments and briefing papers for the politicians and hard operational intelligence for Security Forces in the Field. Yet, the die was cast in late 1972 and early 1973 with the opening by ZANLA of the Nehanda and Chaminuka sectors in north-eastern Zimbabwe. No amount of information or intelligence could reverse the tide and as the chaps settled down to have a *good war* with plenty of cold 'chimboolies' (beers) to wash away the dust after 'foot slogging it' in the bush, the war raged on to its final conclusion. In the event the records of thousands of guerrilla names; weapon numbers; details on how many times the Mugagao camp commander went to the toilet in a twenty-four hour period; how many men had been executed during the ZIPA or third-force internecine political struggle in the Mocambique camps; and the extra-marital affairs of a particular left-wing suspect known to be a ZANU sympathizer were all very interesting but irrelevant. It mattered not that the SB could report in lavish detail about the Birmingham-based Zimbabwe Medical Aid (ZIMA) and their endeavours to raise funds and purchase medical supplies for Zimbabwean guerrillas. The comfortable

days of the 1960s when mass incursions of SAANC and ZAPU and isolated ZANU insurgents were speedily eliminated in fire-force operations were long gone. The bottom-line effect of all this efficiency was to prolong the agony of the war. There were some successful operations — the assassination of Herbert Chitepo, Alfred Nikita Mangena, J. Z. Moyo, Ethan Dube and others set back ZANLA and ZIPRA plans for large-scale external raids but they only helped stave off the final day of reckoning.

The paucity of valid, published contributions by former participants towards a better understanding of our recent history is disappointing. This International Conference on the Zimbabwe Liberation War may now provide an opportunity to enhance our comprehension — myth must not take the place of facts.